

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claims 1 to 4 and 8 to 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Castelli et al. in view of Cushner et al. and McConnell. Claims 5 to 7, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Castelli et al. in view of Cushner et al. and McConnell, and further in view of Schisler et al.

Claims 1 and 10 have been amended. Claim 9 has been canceled. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested in view of the following comments, and allowance of all the claims respectfully requested.

Rejection to Claims under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph

Claim 1 has been amended to recite further structure such as a sleeve forming station and sleeve translation device. Support for the amendment is found at [0042] and in incorporated by reference U.S. Patent No. 6,615,721, for example.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection to Claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 1 to 4 and 8 to 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Castelli et al. in view of Cushner et al. and McConnell. Claims 5 to 7, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Castelli et al. in view of Cushner et al. and McConnell and further in view of Schisler et al.

Castelli et al. teaches UV-curing of coatings. The process is not continuous in an axial direction, but only in a circumferential or rotational direction. (See Castelli, for example, at Fig. 3 or col. 5, lines 9 to 12.).

Cushner et al. disclose a device for applying a coating to a sleeve having defined ends using an axially-moving process. The device cannot be used for a continuous process, as a fixed length sleeve 104 is inserted onto a mandrel. (See Cushner, for example, col. 4, line 25 and col. 19, at lines 42-48).

McConnell discloses forming an endless sleeve for a flexographic print process by an

axially-moving continuous process. No coatings are applied however. The endless sleeve is cut into sleeves having ends. (See McConnell for example, at Col. 4, lines 13-33).

Schisler does not disclose sleeve formation; it is directed primarily toward a method of producing a cured foamed polymer by mechanically frothing a radiation-curable composition and curing the frothed composition with radiation.

Independent claim 1 as amended recites a device for manufacturing a printing blanket comprising:

a sleeve forming station, the sleeve forming station forming a continuously axially-moving base sleeve;

a sleeve translation device, the sleeve translation device translating the base sleeve in a continuously-axially moving fashion in a translation direction;

a liquid applicator located downstream of the sleeve forming station in the translation direction, the liquid applicator applying a radiation-curable polymer to the continuously axially-moving base sleeve;

a radiation source located downstream of the liquid applicator in the translation direction, the radiation source curing the radiation-curable polymer on the continuously axially-moving base sleeve; and

a cutter located downstream of the radiation source in the translation direction, the cutter cutting the continuously axially-moving base sleeve into a desired length.

Support is found for example in [0042], [0049] and incorporated by reference U.S. Patent No. 6,615,721.

None of the references shows a cutter located downstream of a radiation source in the translation direction. McConnell cuts prior to any layers being applied. Castelli and Cushner do not need or desire cutters, as the sleeve already has a predetermined length.

In addition, it further respectfully submitted that one of skill in the art, if motivated to combine the references (and it is respectfully submitted that no motivation is present), would have first formed base sleeves and cut them, and then passed the cut sleeves through a coating and curing apparatus. Cushner for example discusses taking a fixed length sleeve from DuPont (the apparent owner of the McConnell patent) and placing it on a mandrel (See col. 19, line 42 et

seq. of Cushner). Thus Cushner specifically teaches away from placing a cutting apparatus downstream from its device, as the sleeve is to be cut prior being placed on the mandrel.

Independent method claim 10 has been amended to recite similar limitations.

Withdrawal of the rejection to claims 1 and 10 and their dependent claims under 35 U.S.C. 103 is thus respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is respectfully requested that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and applicants respectfully request such action.

Respectfully submitted,

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